h Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4
Ma'adan

582 It would, of course, be practically impossible for an Englishman,
591 even were he a convert to Islam, to marry a girl of a good Sharif Arab tribe. If such a thing were permitted, he would never be allowed to take the girl away from the tribe, and he himself would have to adopt a nomad existence, and settle down with the girl's parents.

619 In the above notes I have not referred to the tribes of Iraq. Their main Badawin tribes, namely 'Anizah, Shammar and Dhafir are all Sharif tribes, but their settled tribes, known as Ashaiyir (singular: Ashira) are half marsh tribes (Ma'adan) or have their origin in some pure desert tribe of Arabia, such as Zubaid, Rabiah, etc. Nevertheless, because they have become settled and cultivate the soil, the desert man to-day tolerates no inter-marriage with even the best of them.

592 A few technical terms denoting various family relationships may here be discussed, for they throw light on the Badawin social system.

AHL. (or Al.)

619 (*a*) Many tribes or sub-tribes have the prefix Ál put before them, when they are referred to, example Ál Murra, Ál Ruwala. This should not be mistaken for the article *al*.

Ál is like the term "Beni", e.g. Beni Khalid, Ál Khalid.

(*b*) Ahl is the common term used to represent a man's people or kin. You ask a Badawin *Wain ahlak?* (Where are your folk?), he will answer, *Naqim fi falan falan makan* (They are camped in such and such a place). In short, the word is commonly understood to mean a man's wife, sisters, children, father, mother and any relation who may be camped with him.

592 A man says *Ya 'Ayál* when addressing his sons or his family
601 as a whole. He will also say *Kaif hál al 'Ayál?* when enquiring after
551 the health of another person's children and family generally.

The term *ahl al bait* denotes also the wife of the tent-dweller, and like *raiyat al bait*, the mistress of the house. It is not commonly used.

The mistress of the tent is *Um al 'ayál* (mother of the children) to her husband or others, or she may be addressed as "Um Sa'ud", "Um Hamad", "Um Badr", etc. She is rarely called by her own personal
574 name. A guest should certainly refer to her as mother of so and so if he were on sufficiently good terms to ask after his host's wife at all. A wife calls her husband "Rai al Beit" as well as by his proper name.

A. Dickson G-6 (1929-47) 1951 MS I Kuwait
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The Tent Neighbour

Chap. VII

The word *gair* means a tent-neighbour, and the laws relating to the treatment of the *gair* are held perhaps in even greater reverence than any other custom connected with an Arab's honour, not excepting even the laws of *dakhala* and *wajh* and the treatment of a guest (*dhaif*). 421

The *gair* is under Allah's protection, and many poems and stories have been written from earliest times dealing with the sacred rights of the *gair*, and of the way in which an honourable Arab should treat a neighbour.

Strictly speaking, a tent-dweller is your *gair* if he pitches his tent within the distance which you can cover when throwing your cane (*'asa*) or your camel-stick (*mikhsaf*). This was very carefully explained to me by Rashidi falconers at Artifjan in 1932 (Salim ibn Mahayun, Sa'ud bin Nimrun, and Akkas, the latter's cousin), who demonstrated the distance such sticks could be thrown by a strong man.

It follows, then, that anyone who pitches his tent close to a fellow Badawin's tent, becomes, *ipso facto*, his tent-neighbour, and enjoys the privileges of a *gair*.

This is done every day where men are of the same tribe, and it means that groups so camped together can rely on each other for mutual support, and are bound to help each other, whether an enemy threatens all or one of them, or whether there is shortage of food, water or the like.

In everyday existence in the desert, a man's tent-neighbours will [371] normally consist of his male relations (*hami 'dar*) or relations on his mother's side (*khawal*), who camp together for mutual convenience and protection. Although all are strictly speaking tent-neighbours, and come under the protection of the senior member of that particular family, the term *gairu* is not usually applied to such collection of tents, seeing that the owners are all related, and are bound, by the ties of relationship, to stand by each other in any case.

Where the laws of *gair* specially apply is when a member of a strange tribe, or even of a hostile tribe, comes and asks if he may camp close to such and such person's tent, become his neighbour and join his tribe in their migrations. If his request is granted, and it is practically never refused, then the following code at once comes into